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Envoy to Greece Hit in House Study

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY

Star Staff Writer

A House Foreign Affairs subcommittee staff study on Greece describes the U.S. Embassy in Athens as having "very low morale" because political reporting of embassy officers is subordinated to rescuing Ambassador Henry J. Tasca and his career from errors.

The document, prepared by staff consultant Clifford P. Hackett after a one-month assignment there in August, was furnished to newsmen yesterday by Elias P. Demetracopoulos, an exiled Greek journalist.

Committee staff administrator Roy J. Bullock confirmed the authenticity of the study, but said it was only an internal memorandum that has no status with the subcommittee on Europe.

Identification Deleted

"The subcommittee won't be very happy that you have this document," Bullock said. Demetracopoulos declined to say how he obtained the study from which he said he made copies, deleting only the number identifying to whom it was issued.

Since U.S. aid was resumed to Greece in September 1970, Hackett's study said, "The morale of the embassy seems to have declined in direct proportion to the falsity of the perceived trend (toward restoration of constitutional government by the Greek military dictatorship).

"It is not exaggerated to state that there is general dismay in both the embassy and in the State Department in response to both this 'trend' which has now proved illusory and to the political reporting from the embassy which served to reinforce what is now recognized as a false perception."

Hackett continued: "The political reporting has, in the judgment of several embassy officers, been tailored to fit the present ambassador's (Tasca's) preconceptions of what he hoped would be a trend toward constitutional government.

"Athens is seen as a very undesirable post, despite its amenities, where assignment means service under an ambassador who has seriously erred in his perceptions of political developments and where political re-

porting would be subordinated to the exigencies of rescuing that ambassador and his career from those errors."

The study said it was clear that the CIA and U.S. military aid mission in Greece continue to share a "sharply different view from that of the political section" on the political realities.

Amid this "general dismay," Hackett's study added, "Over this divided embassy presides an ambassador now disabused of his earlier optimism concerning the regime's democratic intentions but sharing the political section's pessimism about any prospect of changing the sturdy Greek dictatorship even if Washington were to direct such a change."

The prospect of a change from Washington, he declared, seems remote since the announcement of the visit of Vice President Spiro Agnew. (The study was written before Agnew's recent visit to Greece.)

Bullock said Hackett is a former USIA employee with European experience and was an employee in the office of Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal, D-N.Y., chairman of the subcommittee on Europe.

Demetracopoulos, the exiled journalist, criticized the present Athens government and U.S. military aid to Greece in testimony last July before Rosenthal's subcommittee.

Rosenthal initiated Hackett's trip to Greece on July 22. The assignment was to obtain information on effects of American policy, military relations and the views of both the government and the opposition on the future of American assistance.

Hackett's study said he talked with about 20 opposition leaders, ranging from far right to leftist-liberal, but that he spoke with only one representative of the government, a middle-level civil servant in the foreign ministry.

This man, who Hackett said was suggested to him as appropriate for making a courtesy call, told the committee staffer that Greek politics were not a proper American concern.

The study found that the

American Embassy political section was distressed at what was called the "steady development of the military government and the apparent American inability to make clear our unhappiness with the junta. The unhappiness seems to focus on events since Ambassador Tasca arrived 20 months ago."

Hackett reported to the subcommittee that Tasca's initial assignment was to "justify" full resumption of American aid. He said it was difficult to assess how much embassy staff pessimism is due to the realization that "nothing can change truly in American policy so long as the ambassador remains" and how much to the evident invulnerability of the military government.

Views in Opposition

Hackett found a paradox in that Greek opposition leaders believe the United States could exert a nearly decisive influence on the longevity of the regime while embassy staffers believe Washington couldn't prompt a change even if ordered to do so.

Tasca, a 58-year-old career diplomat and former ambassador to Morocco, assumed his post in January 1970. A native of Providence, R.I., he has been a deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs and has served in Bonn, Rome and with NATO.

A similarly critical report about U.S. foreign policy toward the Greek military government was issued by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a staff report in March. The report said the State Department and the embassy in Athens gave too much credence to junta statements that parliamentary government would be restored and gave away leverage when the U.S. embargo on arms for Greece was lifted last year.

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